

NSC BRIEFING

1 October 1958

State Department review completed

TAIWAN STRAIT

conf. statement,

* || *Aside from US-Nat. Rel. involved in Secy's 30 Sept. press*

I. There has been little change in political aspects of Taiwan Strait situation during past week.

A. Chinese Communists are standing pat. Their public statements give impression they believe pressure in free world is building up against US position.

B. Soviets have given no hint they plan to raise Strait issue in UN at this time.

1. Soviet newspapers have, however, placed new stress on seating of Communist China in UN as "only solution" to Taiwan Strait crisis and have even asserted this is the prerequisite for "averting war."

2. Communists may be waiting for further build-up of tension before making their move in UN. Ambassador Lodge is apprehensive that several UN members (especially in Latin America) may cease backing the US if issue becomes one of "war or peace."

C. Chinese Nationalists continue their opposition to any concessions to Communists.

* || *Improvement in Chinese supply picture (evoked by offshore island sit. itself)*
has lessened pressures in Taipei for unilateral action against mainland.

II. Chinese Communists, Nationalists, and Russians all apparently waiting further developments in Chinmen blockade situation.

Should not memo include, as a sep. section, a brief acct of Nat. reactions thus far to Secy. Dulles' 30 Sept. remarks? *But that this does not*
Also, what does this code for US-Nat. Rel., + for [Continued next p.]

A. Supply deliveries improved during last week, but average daily totals still below minimum requirements of garrison. (Daily average last week 175 tons, previously was 100 tons; minimum requirement 300 tons daily.) Taiwan Defense Command confident, however, minimum totals can soon be supplied.

1. Bad weather, which will continue through winter, forced cancellations convoys three days last week.

2. As of 30 September food stocks on Chinnens totaled 36 days and ammunition stocks 20 days.

III. Chicom have made no new moves to tighten blockade. However, as supply picture brightens and Nationalist air force continues an excellent performance, Chicom may come to believe their negotiating position has been weakened and decide to up military stakes. Among measures open to them are:

A. Intensification of artillery interdiction.

150 new gun positions opposite Chinnens, making a total of about 1,000 positions, not all occupied. (Now about 370 guns there.)

B. Mining of sea approaches. We have no evidence that Chicom considering this course, but we think it is a possibility.

C. Air attacks against sea and air supply lines.

1. So far, Communist aircraft have made no attacks on convoys.

↓
Still 2
pg. of
this
thrust

↓
See our
remarks
on last p.

Chances of unilateral Nat. action? [FE, ONE gun; US in for a
period of greater sensitivity + further of Nat. Chances of last
unimp. action are somewhat greater than to date it
would still, 55-45, [redacted] Nat. action not likely in immediate future.

3. So far, one Nationalist transport plane has been lost to anti-aircraft fire, none to fighters.

D. Communists could also increase pressure by more direct action such as seizure of Tatan and Shrian. 25X1

K. Communists could begin operations against hitherto unoccupied Matsus--interdiction or attack.

1. [redacted] continued build-up of artillery positions and other military facilities on Peiling Peninsula, opposite Matsus. (150 gun positions--about half of them occupied.) 25X1

F. Finally, Chicom could make frontal assault on Chiamen itself, but this seems unlikely at present.

IV. Before taking any direct action, however, we think Chicom wants to improve performance of their air force.

A. We noted last week that there is evidence of high-performance aircraft operating in Strait area (possibly MIG-19--FAIRB) but no such aircraft have been used in combat.

B. Chicom might also want to use better pilots.

1. US embassy in Moscow cites first indications in Soviet press that Soviet air force personnel being prepared psychologically for "volunteer" service in Far East.

C. Chinat use of Sidewinder missile has provoked a strong propaganda reaction from Peiping, and may result in Chinese use of similar Soviet-made weapons.

1. Peiping calls Chinat use "criminal action" and promises "positive blow" against Chinat air force.

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V. Chinese Communists also continue their numbered warnings against US armed "provocations" (18th was issued on 30 September). Make no threat of counter-action, but we suspect Chinese may be considering one or more of the courses listed above with the object of:

- A. Increasing pressure on US in Warsaw talks and/or.
- B. Provoking unilateral Chinat action which would give the Communist bloc a case to take to the UN.

VI. But, "Considering" doesn't mean they'll do this. This is a possibility, though we ^{necessarily} continue to judge that C.C. pressure will remain about as has been for some time.

Sherman - This briefing note repeats yesterday's performance: i.e., ticking off capabilities plus above # IV - we "suspect" that they are "considering". Not effect of this briefing is an ext. of [redacted] + State? view that C.C. pressure may slacken in time. There 3 shades of ext. on C.C.'s + o/ci - ONE in mid [redacted]

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